

## The Origin and Purpose of URANTIA Brotherhood

### Origin

URANTIA Foundation was established on January 11, 1950, and was given custody of the plates inscribed with the text of The URANTIA Book. Five years later, pursuant to their responsibility to safeguard the text of the book and to provide for the wise dissemination of its teachings, the Trustees of the Foundation organized URANTIA Brotherhood. The Brotherhood officially originated on January 2, 1955.

The story of the personalities and events involved in the creation of the Foundation and the Brotherhood deserves to be told more fully than can be done here and now. Concerning the origin of the Brotherhood, always remember that URANTIA Foundation came first--both in time and in responsibility for the human fostering of the Fifth Epochal Revelation.

### Purpose

Article II of the constitution of URANTIA Brotherhood states the purposes of the Brotherhood in one long sentence. All the purposes enumerated there are summed up in two basic ideas--the beginning and the ending of the sentence: (1) The Brotherhood exists to study and to disseminate the teachings of The URANTIA Book. The teachings, not the Book itself, receive primary emphasis. (2) Fraternal association is the medium through which the Brotherhood is to operate in relation to its purposes. Other means of disseminating the teachings might be initiated by the Trustees of the Foundation, but it would appear that fraternal association is the sole means at the disposal of the Brotherhood.

Since before the Brotherhood was established by the Trustees, it has been known that we must foster the growth of "thousands of study groups." Fraternal association implicitly includes this vital task.

URANTIA Brotherhood is not synonymous with the spiritual fellowship of believers--the kingdom-family of God which transcends all social institutions. In fact, as is clear from its relationship to URANTIA Book study groups, most of whose members are not now, and may never choose to become members of the Brotherhood, the Brotherhood does not even include or necessarily represent all dedicated disciples of the URANTIA Revelation. Thus we are to be a scaffolding, a facilitator for the invisible brotherhood; we must never try to replace it. In the words of the Brotherhood's first president, we must remain "a brotherhood, not a church or a sect."

We all know the dangers of institutionalization in religion. Many of us have been reluctant to join any formal organization connected with religion. We can understand that our brothers and sisters in the Spirit, even those who accept the URANTIA Revelation as we do, may not wish to join URANTIA Brotherhood. However, we may remain mindful of the protective functions which the Brotherhood serves, even for those who do not choose to join it.

First, in certain ways known to our Foundation attorneys, the Brotherhood helps URANTIA Foundation to maintain the copyright and registered marks which are vital to our keeping the text of the Book unaltered. For example, we always ask permission and comply with Foundation policy when we use quotations from the Book or reproduce the registered marks on our URANTIA Society letterhead or our membership cards, we help to establish a pattern of cooperation with the Foundation. Legally, this contributes to the Foundation's ability

to show that it is actively "policing" the copyright. No copyright can be maintained without such a showing. All present and future beneficiaries of the URANTIA Revelation are served by this, for the copyright protects the Book against change or imitation.

Second, the Brotherhood has a socially protective function. It stands for the religious liberty of each individual, his right to study the Book or not, to believe it or not, without the confusion or coercion which would result if we had no official URANTIA social organization dedicated to such liberty.

As we gain valuable experience in learning to cooperate with the seraphic planetary government to bring about a spiritual renaissance, our continuing growth in this task depends upon persistent effort in at least three fundamental areas: (1) Study of The URANTIA Book; (2) positive fraternal association; (3) personal spiritual communion--living faith.

It is amusingly true that "if you don't know where you're going, you may end up somewhere else." But there is also much of value in the approach which administrative theory calls "muddling through." If you don't know where you're going, you may be surprised when you get there. A balanced philosophy of growth includes elements of both planning and that openness to the unexpected which is the positive aspect of "muddling through."

In Paper 99 we are told that mankind is now under way towards an unrevealed destiny. Intelligent planning and prayerful consideration of our group purposes must be balanced by the realization that our unseen friends see more clearly than we can and plan more wisely than we do. We may not always know where we are going, but we must be constant in our loyalty and remain willing to act according to the highest truth we have come to know. Perhaps the rule for personal spiritual growth applies to our organization, our Brotherhood, as well: Live loyally each day. A clear vision of the future will not necessarily get us there. If our loyalty and diligence come near to the standard set by John the Baptist or Saul of Tarsus, we may then dare to claim a greater understanding of our mission than they had of theirs.

We have been given much. We have our marching orders. In liaison with God, we will be true to our trust.

David R. Gray

January 16, 1977

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